

**Town of North Smithfield Planning Board
Kendall Dean School, 83 Green Street
Thursday, May 17, 2012, 7:00 PM**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1. Roll Call

Present: Present: Chair Lucien Benoit, Dean Naylor, Gene Simone, Alex Biliouris, Mali Jones, Gene Currie. Absent: Art Bassett. Also present were Town Planner Bob Ericson and Town Solicitor Rick Nadeau.

2. Approval of Minutes: April 19, 2012

Mr. Currie made a motion to approve the minutes of April 19, 2012, as corrected. Ms. Jones seconded the motion, with all in favor.

3. Navigant Credit Union Major Land Development Project: Master Plan Public Hearing

Owner/Applicant: Navigant Credit Union

Location: 925 Victory Highway, Assessor's Plat 1, Lot 108, Zoning: BN (Neighborhood Business)

The Chair stated that Ms. Jones would be voting on this application,

along with the four full members of the Board present at the meeting.

Mr. Ericson informed the Board that the applicant had met with the neighbors and submitted revised plans with no entry/exit on Homecrest Avenue, which is a major improvement that also reduces impervious cover. He suggested that the Board members ask how the applicant plans to fully buffer the sight line between the commercial parking and residential zone, at least to the southernmost residential property line opposite the Navigant site.

Attorney John Shekarchi was present for the applicant. He introduced traffic engineer Robert Clinton of VHB, who presented his credentials and a summary of the traffic impact study. He stated that the study had been conducted during peak periods of traffic for the credit union and for businesses along the adjacent roadway. He also included proposed development and future potential growth. The study included safety aspects, wait times, and sight distances. He stated that as a business, a credit union is not a big traffic generator, and that most traffic will be pass-by trips. He also used counts from the Smithfield Navigant site (Route 44 location) in his analysis. His conclusion is that the amount of traffic generated will not impact the levels of service currently existing on Route 102. He added that the traffic study used the most conservative numbers, and that calculated levels of service and calculated delays are often higher than what actually occurs in the field.

Mr. Naylor asked about the traffic patterns within the site and whether significant queuing will occur at the drive-thru lanes. Mr. Clinton stated that at the Route 44 site, there was a maximum of two vehicles in any lane (three total lanes), but that there were never six total vehicles (never two vehicles in each lane at any one time). He does not anticipate queuing problems within the site. He added that the layout is good for exiting the site, with the length of the exit lane giving adequate room to accommodate traffic within the site, as well as traffic exiting the site.

Mr. Biliouris asked if there would be a stop sign at the exit. Mr. Clinton stated that typically the RIDOT does not like stop signs in driveways. This application will go to RIDOT during the physical alteration permitting process, so if a sign is necessary, they will decide during that time.

In response to the Chair's questions, Mr. Clinton stated that sight distances were more than adequate. Mr. Naylor asked whether making no right turns on red at the traffic light at Brigido's would have any impact on the traffic. Mr. Clinton stated that he didn't think it would be necessary, given the distance and the number of curb cuts between the Navigant site and that intersection.

Navigant Facilities Manager James Drake stated that the credit union would reach full service level about three years after opening. Mr. Biliouris asked about the location of the ATM at the back of the

building and related safety issues. Mr. Drake stated that the location in the rear of the building is standard and gives better flow through the site. He added that most towns mandate the back location. He also stated that he is comfortable with the level of security available. Ms. Jones also asked about the security of the drive-thru ATM and asked if there is a panic button available. Mr. Drake stated that there is a certain radius of foot candles for lighting, CCTV that is recorded for months, as well as many alarms. He said there is no panic button, and while it probably can be added, it may become a nuisance to the police department.

The Chair asked when construction would begin and when the credit union would open. Mr. Drake stated that construction would take approximately eight months, and they would like to start next fall. If they don't start in the fall, they would begin construction in the following spring. Mr. Simone asked about signage. Mr. Drake stated that it would be located above the door and there will probably be a pylon sign. This will be detailed at Preliminary Plan stage.

Mr. Ericson stated that with commercial parking abutting residential properties, opaque screening is required. He said the existing screening is insufficient. He would like to see a natural barrier. Mr. Shekarchi stated that the applicant will note that and make appropriate changes.

The Chair opened the hearing to the public at 7:35 pm.

Ray Sylvestre, an abutting property owner on Homecrest Avenue, addressed the Board. He stated that he and some neighbors have met with the applicant since the previous meeting. He stated that he commends Navigant on their willingness to work with the abutting property owners. He stated that he still has strong concerns with the added traffic and the safety issues for the people living on Homecrest Ave. He said he disagrees with Navigant's analysis that there will be no additional traffic with the opening of their business. He stated that he is not against the development, but he does not want it to happen at the risk of the residents' safety and security. He said that he would like to have the street turned into a cul-de-sac, instead of a through street, but he would also ask the Town Council to approve adding speed bumps to the road to deter drivers from using Homecrest Ave. as a cut through street. He added that the traffic is more than a nuisance; it is a hazard. The Chair suggested lowering the posted speed on the road, but Mr. Sylvestre stated that they drivers don't pay attention to the speed limit.

The Chair stated that with new development, the Planning Board would have more to say about the construction of streets, but since this is an existing road, the Town Council needs to decide. Mr. Ericson said he would have the DPW director discuss options with the Town Council. He said another option is to lower the perceived design speed by planting bushes along the road that appear to constrict the roadway. Mr. Sylvestre asked if it would be acceptable to

have neighbors sign a petition to present to the Town Council. Mr. Ericson stated that it would be a good idea.

Colleen Bogan, who has lived on Homecrest Ave. for seven years, also addressed the Board. She stated that she is also very concerned with traffic and the safety of the children and residents of the neighborhood. She gave some examples of cars speeding through the neighborhood and stated that the situation has been dangerous with Dunkin' Donuts traffic and that it will only be worsened by the additional business. The Chair stated that enforcement issues are handled by the police, but that the concerns can be brought to the Town Council.

Mr. Ericson stated that another public hearing will be held at the time of Preliminary Plan review, in approximately 3-4 months. Mr. Naylor made a motion to close the public hearing at 7:55 pm. Mr. Simone seconded the motion, with all in favor.

Mr. Biliouris made a motion that the Planning Board approve the Major Land Development Master Plan revised to April 30, 2012 for the Navigant Credit Union branch at 925 Victory Hwy, Plat 1, Lot 108 with one condition: that the opaque screening between the commercial parking and residential zone meet all zoning requirements. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. Planning Board vote was as follows: YES: Mr. Benoit, Mr. Biliouris, Mr. Naylor, Mr. Simone, Ms. Jones.

4. Review of proposed zoning ordinance amendment to Section 6.19, Regulation of groundwater aquifer zones, groundwater recharge areas, wellhead protection areas and water supply basin with possible votes or other actions on consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and other recommendations to the Town Council.

Carolyn Shumway, representing the ODC, was present with new impervious cover updates from Lorraine Joubert of the URI NEMO program. The Board reviewed the tables in the report. Mr. Ericson asked the Board to review the ordinance for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. The URI tables considered all options and buildouts for the aquifer zones. One major issue is that the town needs to ensure the viability of commercial/industrial zones. He stated that the town is looking for low impervious cover overall in the aquifer protection area, but not at the expense of commercial and industrial development. He suggested one option of recommending 40% impervious limits for commercial and industrial zones, with redevelopment up to existing impervious cover for pre-existing non-conforming lots. The present Zoning Ordinance, Section 6.19.9, considers only lot size, allowing 40% impervious cover for lots under 200,000 square feet and 30% for lots over 200,000 square feet.

Ms. Shumway explained three different scenarios generated by the report. She stated that a goal of 35% impervious is not onerous, since the townwide analysis shows that current BH districts are at 34.5%.

She also said it could be written in as a goal of 35-40%, which gives the option for a variance. Mr. Biliouris expressed concerns with existing situations in which development would not be possible, since the percentage of impervious is already greater than 35%. He gave an example of a 100,000 square ft. lot. If there is a 20,000 square ft. building, with 20,000 square ft. of parking area, then the property is already at 40% impervious. He also suggested trying to create an ordinance that will work in conjunction with improved technology. With technology improving water quality, it may not be necessary to limit the impervious area. Ms. Shumway stated that the town should be encouraging best management practices, and for the sake of writing an ordinance a number is needed. Since the actual BH districts in town are less than 35% impervious, the 35% goal should be workable.

The Chair stated that the Board can vote on the ordinance's consistency with the Comp Plan, but that more discussion is needed and that the Board would like to submit recommendations along with the ordinance to the Town Council. Mr. Ericson said there is time to do this since it likely won't go to public hearing until September.

Mr. Naylor made a motion that the Planning Board finds the proposed amendments to Section 6.19 to be consistent with the North Smithfield Comprehensive Plan, including the Groundwater Aquifer Protection Overlay District zoning map in support of it. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. Mr. Biliouris stated that the Planning Board

had further comments on the ordinance. Mr. Ericson stated that separate recommendations can be submitted. The Chair stated that members have expressed concerns and that further recommendations will be forthcoming. Mr. Ericson stated that he would pass that along with the motion. Planning Board vote was as follows: YES: Chair Lucien Benoit, Dean Naylor, Alex Biliouris, Gene Simone, Mali Jones.

5. Review of proposed zoning ordinance amendment to Section 6.13-6.15, Parking and Loading, with possible votes on recommendations to the Town Council.

Mr. Ericson reviewed a few proposed changes to the Parking and Loading sections of the Zoning Ordinance. He stated that he would submit a clean copy with highlighted changes, as well as a list of all the proposed changes, to the Board for the next meeting. At that time, the Board can move to send the proposed changes to the Town Council.

6. School Department FY2013 Capital Budget and Five-year Capital Improvement Plan:

Review and recommendations to the Budget Committee and Town Council.

The Chair stated that the Board is still anticipating a submission from the School Department. Mr. Ericson stated that the School Committee

stated that they will prepare a synopsis of the Halliwell School study that had been commissioned 6 years ago and present it to the Board. The Chair stated that the Board would like to see the full report.

7. Cherry Brook sub-watershed: Review and approval of letter to Town Council regarding stormwater management options.

Mr. Ericson drafted a letter to the Town Council, as requested at a previous Planning Board meeting, and submitted the draft to the Board. Ms. Jones made a motion to send the letter to the Town Council. Mr. Naylor seconded the motion, with all in favor.

8. Planning update: Review of current events

Items discussed were the resignation of the RI EDC Chair, the Dry Lands bill before the state legislature, savings of \$29,500 from the Johnson Controls energy project, the manufacturing facility at High Rocks, and possible tenants for Dowling Village.

The Chair also asked about activity on the property next to the RV dealership on Quaker Highway. Mr. Ericson stated that he has heard they were going to condo the site. The Chair also asked if there was any current talk about a storage facility on the site of Extreme Restoration.

The Chair also asked about the process for rezoning the area from

Park Square to the Lincoln line along 146A, as well as the area along 102 from Cumberland Farms to the Jehovah's Witness site. Mr. Ericson stated that it has been delegated to the ODC. He also said that the area along Quaker Highway up to the MA line should be a priority. He will put this on the agenda for further discussion.

Mr. Naylor made a motion to adjourn at 9:20 pm. Mr. Simone seconded the motion, with all in favor.

Submitted by Angela Pugliese, May 28, 2012